

## Notes from the President

### *Opportunity for All*

02/26/2010

As this year's campus celebration of Black History Month draws to a close this week, it's important to remember not only what we have achieved in terms of racial and other forms of diversity, but also where we began. Georgia Tech's commitment to equality of opportunity for all is truly historic. In 1961, Georgia Tech became the first university in the "Deep South" to open its doors to African Americans without a court order.

This was not an easy thing for Tech, its leaders, or the students directly involved, as school desegregation remained extremely unpopular among a very large number of people in the South and elsewhere. Georgia Tech took this step not because it was popular, but because it was the right thing to do and history would ultimately vindicate Tech's decision and commend the courage of all involved.

Today we have much to be proud of here at Georgia Tech. We graduate more African American engineers at the bachelor's and doctoral levels than any other institution in the country and are ranked second in the number of master's graduates. In addition, we graduate more women engineers than any other institution in the country and are one of the nation's largest producers of Hispanic engineers. Recently, we initiated a national search to identify a Vice President for Institute Diversity, a position that will provide executive leadership over the numerous diversity initiatives within our academic and administrative units. And just this past month, the Institute welcomed its first African American college dean Dr. Jacqueline Jones Royster, who will assume the leadership of the Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts this summer.

Black History Month is a wonderful reminder of the many contributions of all Americans and in particular, African Americans and the astounding impact they and their contributions have had on the history and heritage of our Institute, our society and our country. More importantly, though, it is also a reminder of our responsibility to continue to ensure that we are providing opportunities, access, and support for all who want to be a part of our community. As we reflect on our proud history, we must also recognize that there is much work to do.

I thank you and Georgia Tech for all you have done and I look forward working together as we continue to think more broadly about how to create a truly inclusive environment for all people.

*G. P. "Bud" Peterson*  
President, Georgia Tech